

Originators of hypertext and hypermedia

TED NELSON STUDIOS

DESIGN • CONSULTING • TOTAL PRODUCTION

CONCEPT

There should be a small interactive design house challenging the majors-- Lucas Arts, The Media Lab, The Apple Multimedia Laboratory-- and that's us. Ted Nelson Studios represents the long-standing dream of Ted Nelson for a workshop setting in which unique interactive designs can be crafted, prototyped and executed. Our capabilities include film, audio, artwork, 3D, and most of all, *unique interactive design*.

Talent, not technology, is the center; we work in the tradition of Frank Lloyd Wright, Walt Disney and Orson Welles. Like a major architectural house (such as the Studios of Frank Lloyd Wright), Ted Nelson Studios offers unique designs, powerfully resolved in detail. The client's requirements will be fully understood-- even overstood-- and creatively realized as a unique design.

Your project will be designed and overseen, not by a committee, but by a well-known and very original designer. Final execution will usually include film or video, animations and music, deeply woven together for a powerful and surprising interactive experience reaching both the mind and heart.

Projects now under discussion for 1993-4 include:

Rollout introduction to a major new multimedia machine

Virtual-reality high-school curriculum

An Exploration of Mathematics (with complex musical transitions).

We are not interested in small projects.

DOCTRINE

What we do is art, not technology. Art is the use of technology for effects on people's ideas and feelings.

The interactive media are a branch of film-- events on a screen that affect the mind and the emotions, with layered effects in many modes, with suspense, surprise, resolution, and building on atmosphere and orientation. Today's interactive media extend and generalize the movie; the computer as such disappears.

We concern ourselves with:

- SYSTEMS OF ORDER, world-rules;
 - the development of dimensions, dualities, over-arching concepts;
- ORIENTATION, CLARIFICATION, VISUALIZATION;
- OVERVIEWS, DETAILS;
- STYLES OF INTERACTION,
 - mapping to a uniquely crafted system of controls and movement;
- and finally,
- EFFECTS AND PRODUCTION VALUES.

PLATFORMS, SOFTWARE, CAPABILITIES

We can do videodisc, CD-ROM, etc. We are committed to no particular media hardware and software; these are in continuing flux with no particular center yet visible. HyperCard® is too limited; QuickTime® may be too limited; we like the Avid® Open Media initiative. (We like the Indigo® for its pan and zoom possibilities.)

Many friends and collaborators are available for whatever particular realizations are required; we are able to draw on a network of talent and capability throughout the computer and film industry.

CLIENT RELATIONS

We accept only a limited number of projects. We pattern ourselves on the architectural firm. As at a major architectural house, many more projects will go through preliminary stages than reach completion; but the process is useful for the client, and in itself produces art (like the sketchbooks of Wright, Gaudi and others).

We expect a project to move through phased stages:

FIRST TALKS AND DEFINITION

PRELIMINARY DESIGN (conceptual backbone, maps, state diagrams)

PRESENTATIONAL ROUGH

(actual interactions with substitute materials in place)

SEMI-FINALIZED PRODUCTION (by segment)

FINISHED PRODUCTION

This is a process of mutual discovery. The client experiences the excitement of being involved in the creation of radical new designs, possibly the making of design history; the studio is deeply involved in the ideas the client wants to present.

As a project moves through major stages, the client sees with increasing precision what happens as a system of ideas is dressed out with full production values. Just as a movie script is not like the movie, no description or map even approximates the finished effect, and there is always difficulty in imagining how it will look and feel; so presenting and explaining the design to the client is usually more difficult than the actual design.

The cost of each stage is, of course, greater than the stage before; but at each stage the client is free to stop, continue, or request redirection.*

* Since our designs will continually innovate, we want to be able to present our record of thought and design. Ted Nelson Studios ordinarily reserves the non-exclusive right of publication, whether or not a project is completed, and certain rights of re-use.

THEODOR HOLM NELSON • CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1957: Wrote, produced and directed world's first rock musical: "Anything & Everything," Swarthmore College.

1959: Wrote, produced and directed film, "The Epiphany of Slocum Furlow," comedy featurette about loneliness at college.

1960: Nelson's vision of a world of personal computer screens, a world publishing repository with automatic royalty, bound by links and transclusion. Begins Project Xanadu™.

Independently invents interactive systems and begins designing.

1961-5: Independent work on many interactive designs.

1965: Paper, "A File Structure for the Complex, the Changing and the Indeterminate" introduces hypertext and transclusive data structures.

1967: Paper, "Getting It Out of Our System," is first comparison of movies to interactive computer systems.

Book, *Media 72* (unpublished)

1968: Helped design first visual word processor (Brown University Hypertext System).

1970: Interactive Production: "How to Be a Department Store Santa Claus" (for CBS Laboratories)

1974: Book, *Computer Lib/Dream Machines*

1977: Book, *The Home Computer Revolution*

1979 (with others): designed global virtuality of Xanadu™ connection server and publishing repository

1981: Book, *Literary Machines*

1982: As Datapoint's chief designer of office software, designed VORTEXT™ high-performance word processor and data structure.

1987: Microsoft edition of *Computer Lib/Dream Machines*

1988-92: Spokesman for Project Xanadu, now widely understood as a result.

1992: One-Man Show, "World Enough," Palo Alto.

1993, underway: Feature film, "Silicon Valley Story," a romantic comedy.

Still under wraps: ZigZag™ hypergrid system-- a universal interface, data and programming system (under proprietary development, still undisclosed)

Note that Nelson continues his relation to Project Xanadu; the software is currently in Beta Test at XOC, Incorporated, Mountainview, CA.

TERMS IN WIDE USE INTRODUCED BY TED NELSON

1965: *hypertext, hypermedia, hyperfilm, hyperdiagram*. **1967:** *softcopy*. **1970:** *image synthesis*. **1972:** *electronic visualization* (and thus the later *computer visualization, scientific visualization*). **1974:** *dildonics*. **1976:** *compound document*. **1977:** *virtuality*. **1981:** *docuverse*. **1987:** *transclusion*.

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